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ABSTRACT

An examination of the journal writing of 14 second graders during one school year reveals the evolution from egocentricity, with the work of one student serving as a model against which similarities and differences in the growth patterns of the other students are measured. The students' drawings and writings reflect their learning about the world and their relationship to it. The egocentric young writers touch on the emotional, social, and cognitive areas of learning, often listing items which interest or confuse them. Later, cause and effect enter into their writing as they formulate questions and concepts, test hypotheses, and experiment with both language and thought in their creative writing. As young writers gain a sense of audience, their egocentrism gives way to sociocentrism and they become aware of public scrutiny. However, peer encouragement and help in the writing process classroom allow young writers to become less self-conscious and explore different modes of expression, taking into account their audiences. Teachers should take care that the making of meaning takes precedence over the correctness of mechanical details and that revision is gently encouraged to preserve the writers' experiences and written expression. (Examples of students drawings and writing illustrate the commentary for each student.) (JK)

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Writers Making Meaning: How Do Young Writers Shape Experience Within the Writing Process?

by Alice Ganz

funded by a teacher - researcher grant from The National Council of Teachers of English - 1984

Research site: Ridge Elementary School, Middle Island Central School District, Middle Island, New York

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Children learn to write by writing about the world around them. Through this writing they also learn about their world and their own relationship to it. I will attempt to demonstrate how this learning takes place within the writing process of second grade students.

Writing is both an integral part of learning a language and a tool for cognitive, emotional, and social development. Each student brings to my second grade class a unique backround of experiences, as well as a unique set of concepts for understanding those experiences, and a unique way of using a shared language.

I have chosen Michelle as a standard against which to measure the growth of all the writers in my study. I have chosen her for a number of reasons, which I need to explain before I go any further. The very nature of qualitative research gives it a somewhat nebulous form. How can I measure such things as growth in the writing process, the shaping of experiences, or the making of meaning, when I have no gauge by which to measure? Using the case study method of such pioneer researchers as Donald Graves (1984), Lucy McCormick Calkins (1983), and Susan Sowers (1982), I will look at similarities and differences in patterns of growth within my second grade population over the time

span of one school year. Michelle was chosen not because she is an average writer. I don't think I could define an average writer. Michelle was chosen because her writing demonstrates a very obvious and prolonged egocentricity, as well as a definite pattern of growth away from this egocentricity and toward a sociocentricity (Britton 1970; Piaget 1955; Moffett 1968; Chukovsky 1963). This is the pattern of growth that all young writers must go through if their writing and their learning are to develop. Using Michelle's growth pattern as a model or gauge, I will note similarities and differences in the growth patterns of several other second grade students. Then I will zero in on the way in which each young writer shapes a set of experiences to make meaning in a world which might otherwise be chaos.

With the help of my research associate, Karla Factor, I will now take you through some of these young writers' journals.

Michelle - first journal

Michelle's early entries in her journal are brief, limited to one or two simple sentences, deal with the immediate moment and are very egocentric. Each sentence contains the word "I" or "my."

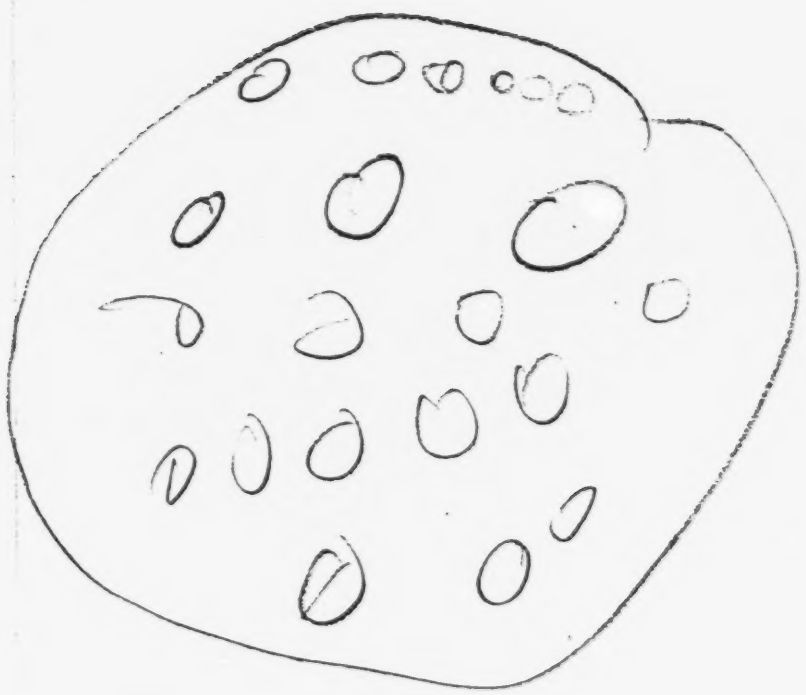
> my rabbit, my brother, my friend,
> my cousins, I am playing, I went out
> to play, I went to Florida.

These function as captions to her drawings. She needs the drawings as prewriting experiences. New topics are results of Michelle reacting to or experiencing something immediate, like rain, sun, or Columbus Day, drawing a picture, and then writing about the picture. When she makes a Halloween mask, an assigned project and writing lesson, her entry, "The Red Killer Monster," is several pages long. She is adding, subtracting, substituting, and rearranging her words to create a more precise description of her monster, just as she does in creating the monster mask itself. She is taking more risks. Her writing is less egocentric and more entertaining. This story seems to have brought a new dimension to Michelle's writing. She is more playful with her words and seems to be more relaxed in expressing her experiences, thoughts and feelings.

M-1a

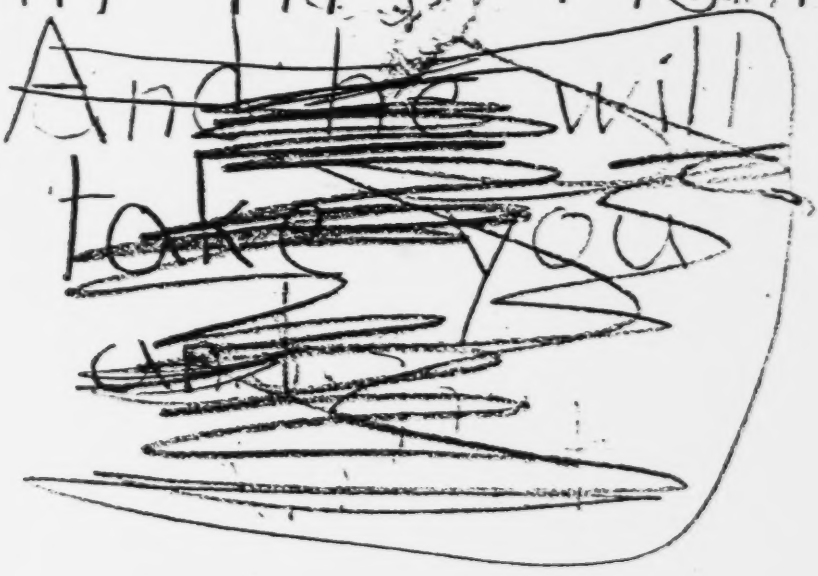
The Red Killer is a monster.

I will make a cookie.



M-16

The Red Killer
can kill your
The [illegible] can
eat you up and
he will have ya
in his mouth
And he will
take you



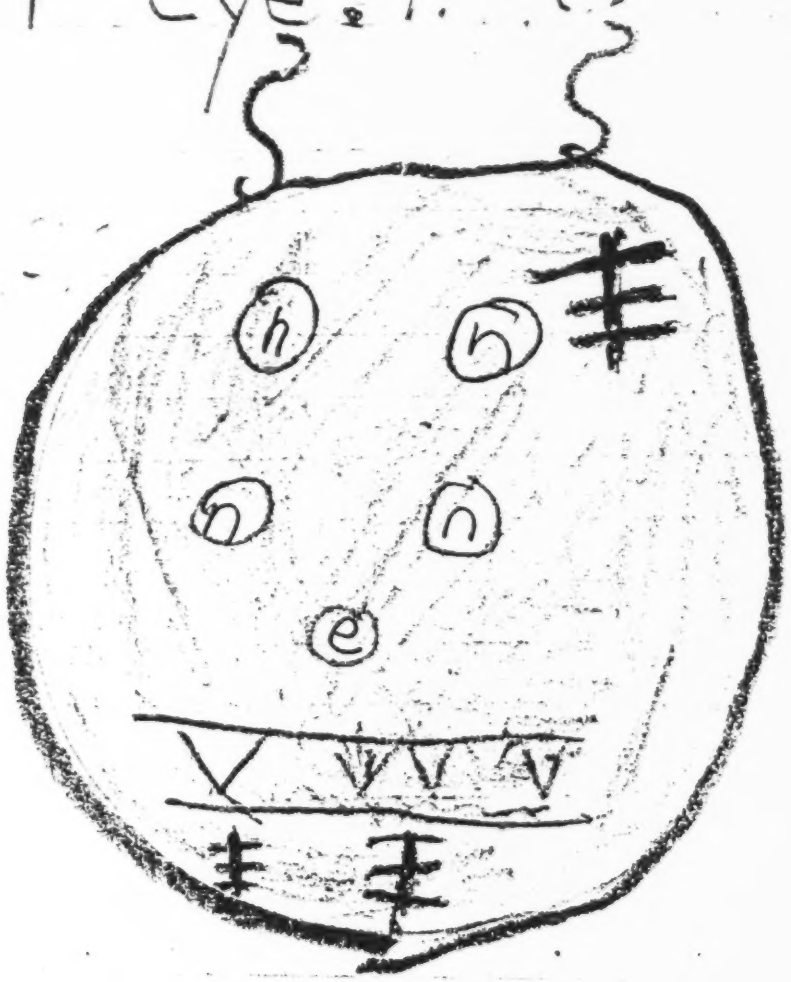
M-1-c

Red Killer

he has ~~and~~

4 noses

and 1 eye.



M-1-d

~~Red Killer~~

He is very scary. ~~And~~

~~Very very.~~

He eat's you and me. ~~And~~ He is a seamonster He lives in the sea. He is a afraid of mice.

31. M-1-e

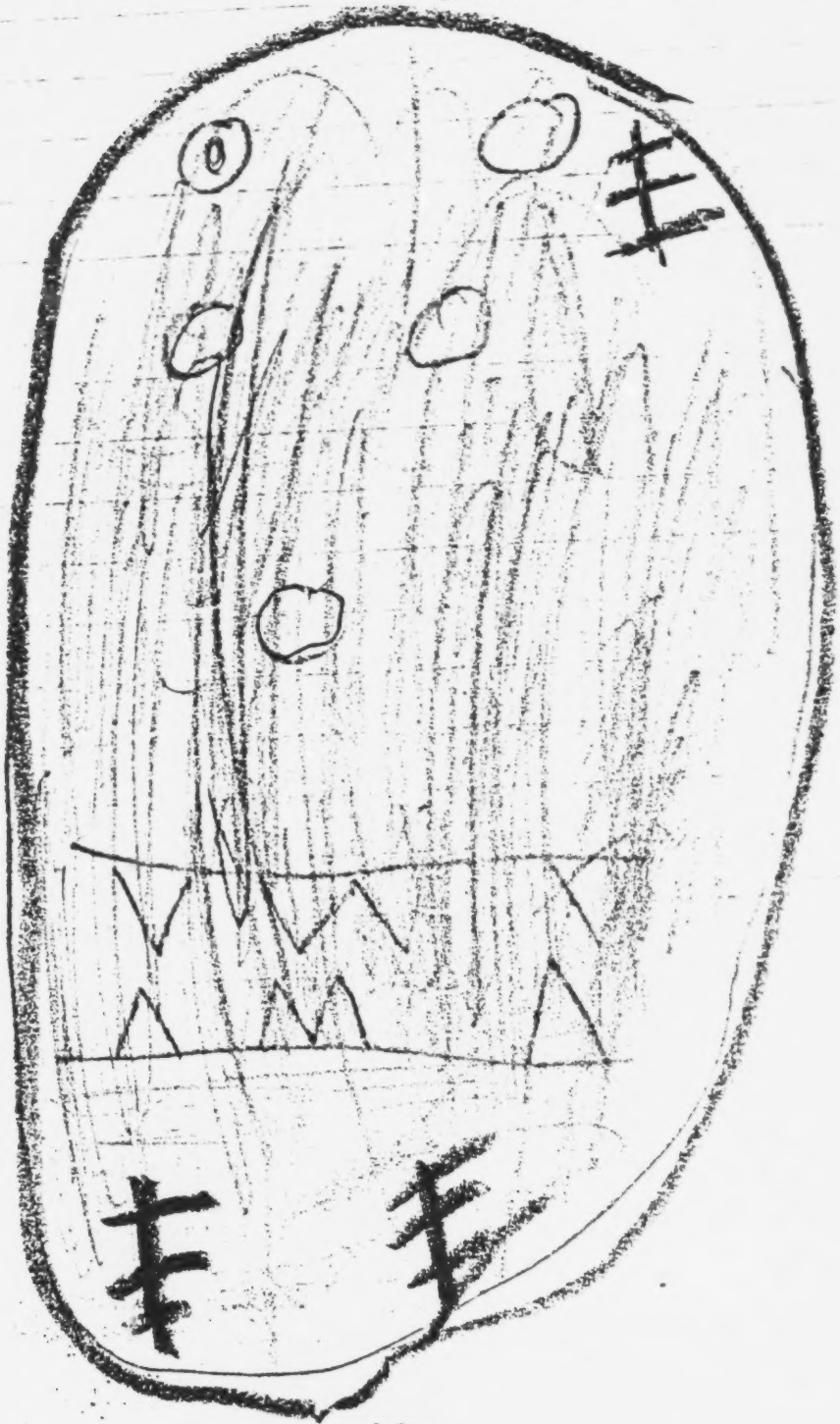
Red Killer

~~he is ugly~~

~~and~~ he is

~~very very ugly.~~

M-1-f



M-1-g

A log. [illegible]

[illegible]

the mouse
wants to
Eat the monster
he ate some
Befor. it
tast good.

94 M-1-h

Red Killer.

~~eats~~ you and r~~.~~

~~sea~~ a he live in

the sea. ~~he~~

~~afiad of~~ mise

the littel

mouse saved

the dax.

I will tall y/

M-1-i

Supe moose

wate mose
he chast him
and chast
him.
when he got home
He ate him up.
The ~~End~~
End.

Michelle is exploring new time concepts of past and future.

> yesterday and this Saturday. Halloween's coming and a monster will get you.

She is expanding her written awareness of the world around her. She is using new words to clarify meanings. Some of her entries are now informative. She is writing to tell what she knows:

> Turkey day is... Elephants are...
> An angel is...

As Michelle continues her journal entries, she is developing a stronger sense of audience. She is inviting her audience to actively participate by answering questions.

> Do you like it too? (referring to Thanksgiving)
> Would you like it too? (referring to seeing out into space)
> What would scare a burglar?

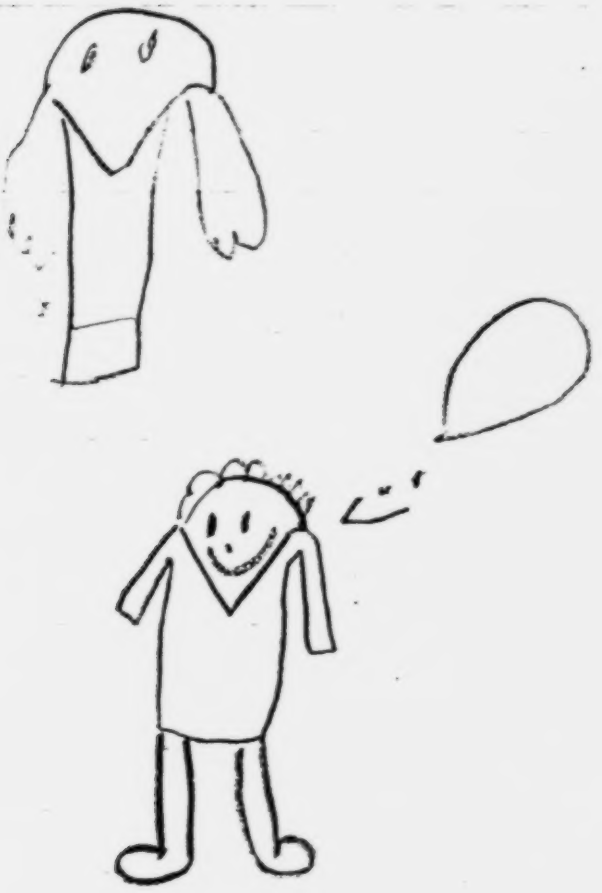
Michelle's humorous story about the three snowballs she put in the mailbox is definitely evidence that she is learning to organize her spoken language and transfer the meaning to written form.

M-2-a

I put 3 Snow balls in the mail box.

Then I came home from school

My mom went out to get the mail. The

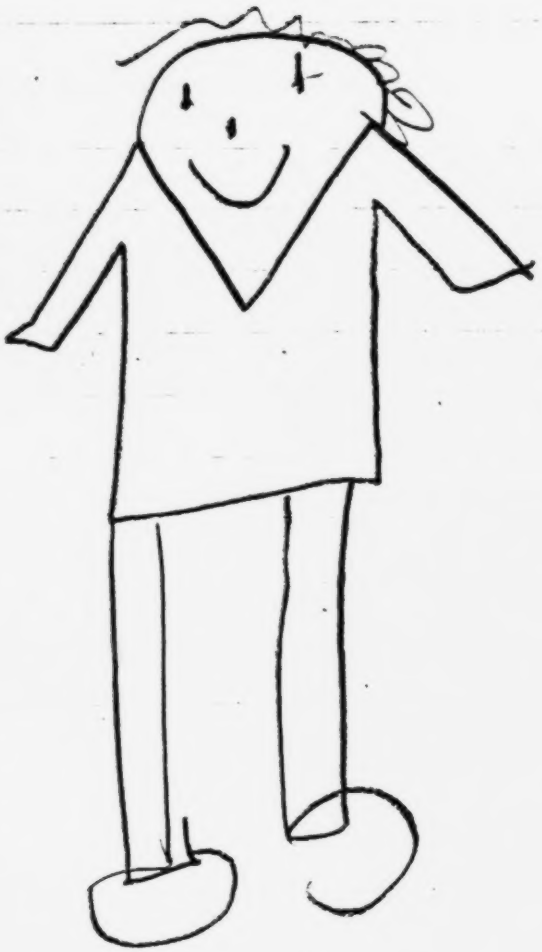


M-2-b

The mail was in the mail box.

and so were the snowballs.

out. My mom said, "did you put them



M-2-c one

in. no a bir-

"N-, you did!

- take the

out. I out

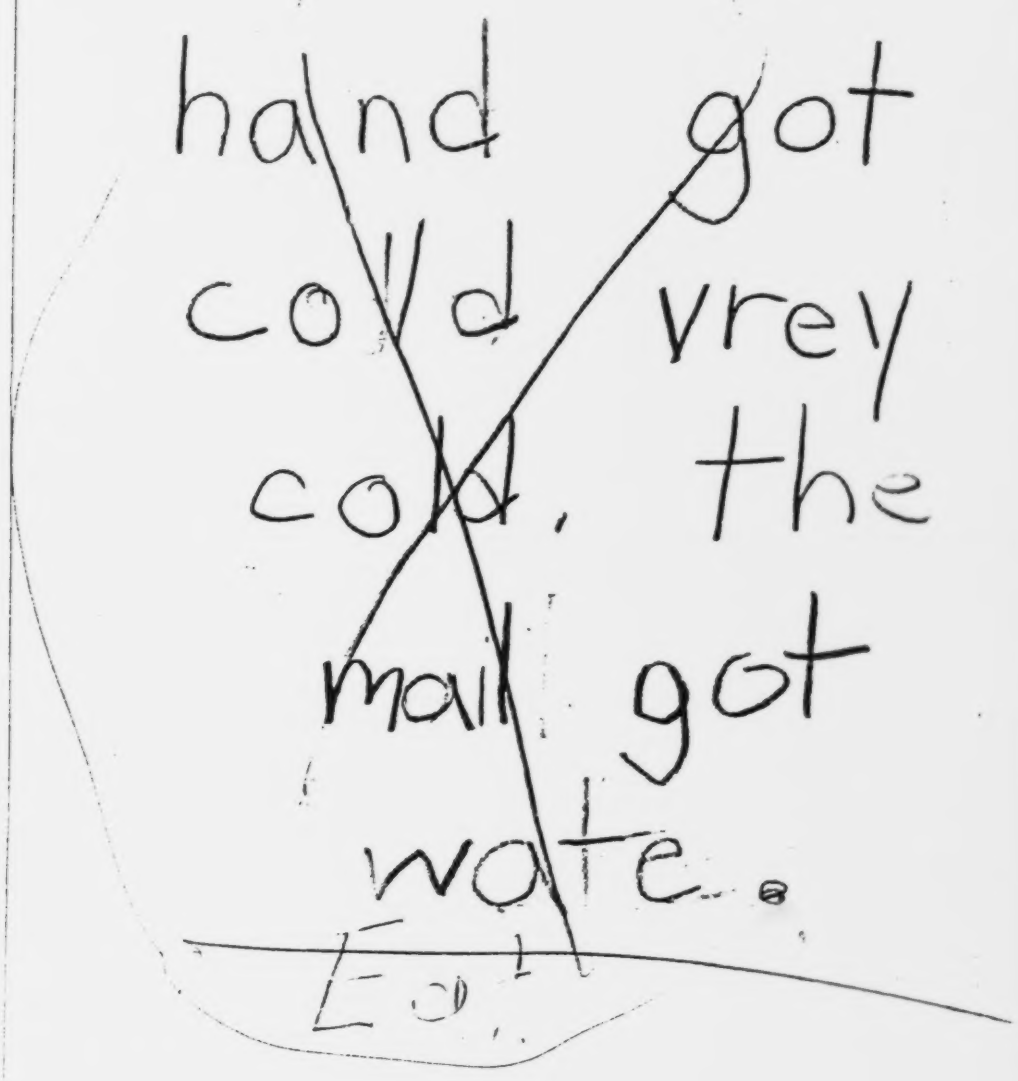
I snwe

ball in

her

M-2-d

face. * her
hand got
cold vrey
cold. the
mail got
wate.



Michelle - second journal

Michelle is continuing to broaden her written expression by increasing the number of subjects and experiences she shares with us.

> bad dreams, books, movies, posters,
> stuffed animals, new furniture and
> wall paper, riddles, trips.

She is taking more risks with sentence structure.

> My tooth fell out last night when I
> was watching Star Wars.

Compared to Michelle's first journal, the second journal has less picture content and more written content.

For the first time Michelle is beginning to raise questions about subjects she is curious about.

> I like Stegosaurus. I wonder if he eats
> people? Meateaters do.; I wonder what
> rabbits do? I wonder what rabbits eat?

Here she tells herself and her audience what she knows and what she wants, or needs, to find out.

Where are the influences which work upon Michelle's writing development during her year in second grade? Much of it has to be seen as a natural process of maturation combined with an ever expanding involvement in the writing process across the curriculum. Although she at first resists revising for an audience, Michelle loves to read her writing aloud to the entire class almost every day. She seems to

enjoy the sound of her own voice as well as the attention of her classmates. She also seems to enjoy listening to her classmates read their stories aloud and comments on these. Michelle's use of questions to her audience in her later journal entries is a technique she has learned from her classmate, Matthew, who uses questions like these in all his stories.

Matthew: Did you know that?
Michelle: Do you like it too?

With these questions Michelle is searching for those points where her own experience or view coincides with that of her audience.

As Michelle reads her stories to an appreciative and supportive audience, she is given many helpful suggestions. When she begins a story about blue jays in her backyard with " I love birds. They are cute," Johnna suggests that she write: "I love blue jays," while Jason contributes: "Yesterday I saw blue jays in the backyard." as Michelle's opening sentence.

Danielle sums up Michelle's egocentrism by telling her: "When you write your stories, it seems that you write to yourself and not to the audience." Although this is often true, Michelle proves in the following excerpt from an editing conference that she has an audience very much in

mind, even if she can't yet get her message across clearly to that audience:

> Michelle is writing about a mother bird feeding her babies worms and spiders. She does not want to include the spiders because "the other kids will think it was strange that the mother was feeding the baby birds spiders."

This is a perfect example of the temporary loss in fluency which often results from self-consciousness as the young writer moves between egocentrism and sociocentrism. We needn't worry about this loss of fluency, however, for Michelle continues to generate new topics. When asked in a conference where she gets her story topics, she says they are "things I think about." It is clear that Michelle is always thinking. Often she thinks much faster than she writes, and it is only in peer editing conferences that she can slow down enough to supply the missing information we need to understand her writing. Here is one example:

> I love my Brier (brother) he is funny. he is 2. went in the car prchrike sad pizze were are you. (Patrick said, "Pizza, where are you?")

During a lively editing conference on this story, we find out that the family is going out to buy a pizza for dinner. Now Patrick's impatient remark finally makes sense. Egocentrism is still very much responsible for Michelle's

cryptic writing, but the conference experience clearly helps. Conferences also help Michelle to discover inaccuracies in her use and pronunciation and ultimately spelling, of new and difficult words. When she reads from her journal, "The volcano cusploded," her classmates teach her the word "exploded," without ridicule for her error, in the gentle way prescribed by Chukovsky, (1963).

Michelle explores her own relationship to the experience of other authors and demonstrates writing across the curriculum when she asks me during a math lesson: "Mrs. Ganz, who wrote our math book?" In a science lesson she hypothesizes that a liter of snow will melt into a liter of water. Months later she predicts that during the solar eclipse it will be dark. Michelle's writing knows no subject boundaries, nor does her learning.

Now let's look at the writing of another egocentric second grade student. James is every bit as egocentric as Michelle, but he lacks her fluency and is beset by serious problems.

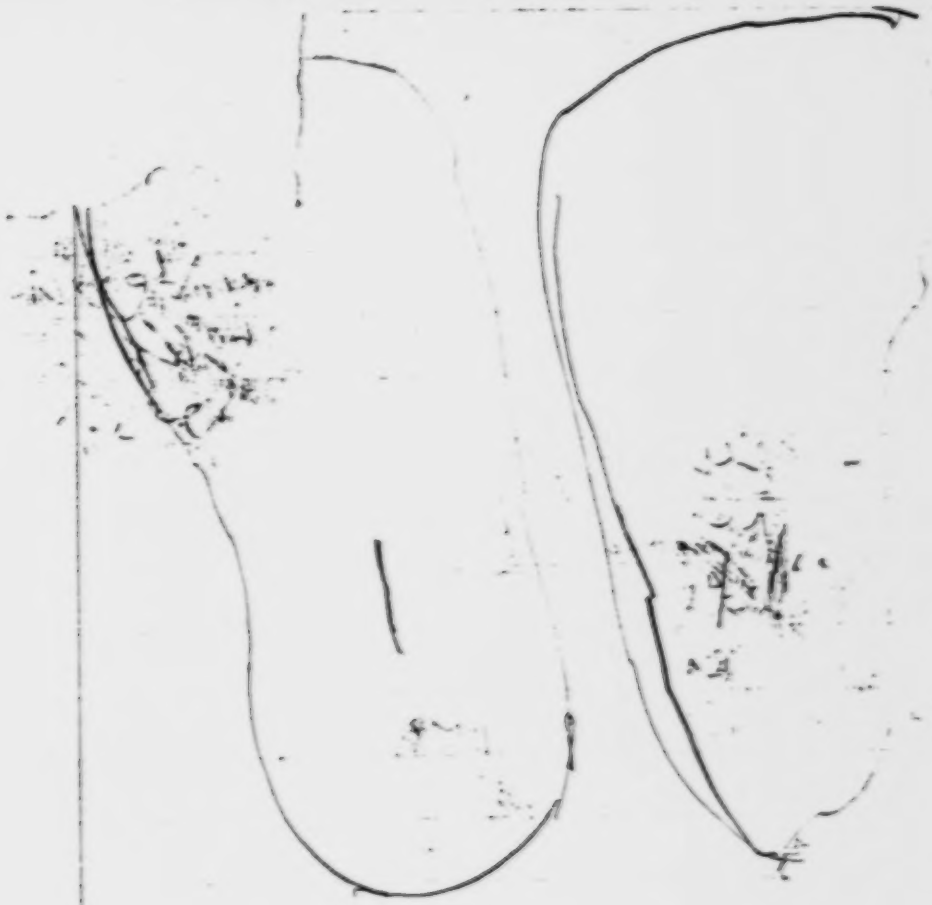
James

James begins his journal with drawings of stick figure people and unidentifiable objects. His manual dexterity seems to be that of a four year old. Much of his

early "writing" is in pseudo-script, a type of scribble which mimics cursive writing without containing any words or even letters. Often preschool children will use this kind of pseudo-script to imitate writing before they have learned the alphabet. James's use of it in second grade indicates both a lack of manual dexterity, as already indicated in his drawing, and a frustration at putting pencil to paper. He wants to write, or feels that he is supposed to do so; otherwise he would have only a picture on the page or a blank page altogether. You can see both the immaturity and the frustration in this sample from James's journal:

J - 1

V



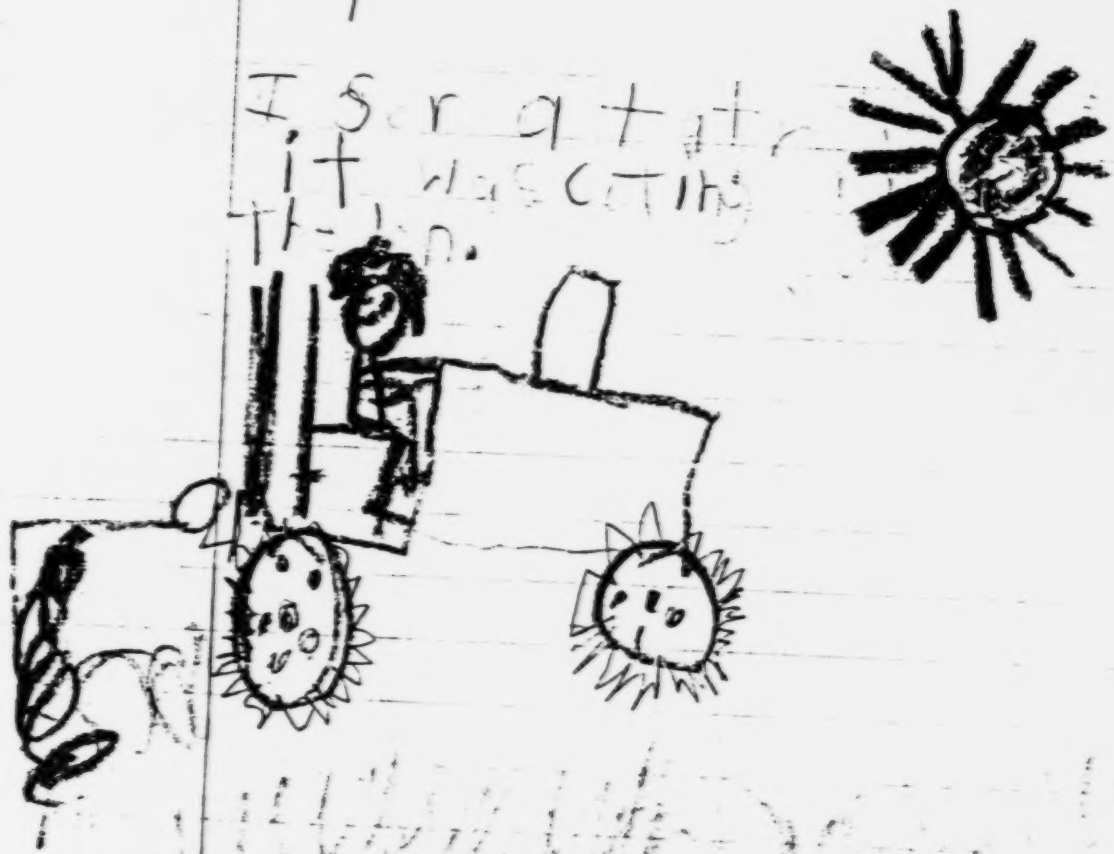
I. Jos Led How to Wok
wehn I got the Shos

J-2

√ 5

I like to ran in the
Hermitage.

4



Soon James begins to print simple stories, using his drawings as an idea bank which he refers to for substance. Frequently he returns to his pseudo-script, especially when he wants to expand upon a theme but doesn't know how, or can't find the words. Some of this pseudo-script begins to contain his name in the cursive form, and even his nickname, Jimmy. His entries share with us glimpses of personal experiences at an egocentric stage. His early writing begins and ends abruptly, with almost no descriptive detail.

> I saw a tractor. It was cutting the lawn.
> I went to the airport. And I went flying
> in a glider.

Later, with some peer editing experience, James begins to add descriptive details.

> I got an organ. It is a little organ.
> It makes funny music.
> I am being Zoro. He is a good fighter.
> He has a black suit. (Halloween)

Now that James has gained some control of the writing process, he seems to be confident enough to use writing as an attempt to make meaning for himself. I use the word "attempt" here, for I do not find evidence in his journal that he is completely successful in piecing together the understanding he is seeking. Several entries are basically repetitions of this one:

I will go with you to the dentist.
We are next. Open wide Jim.

The story never goes beyond "open wide Jim," for James, as he tells us later in conference, has never been to the dentist. He wants very much to go, but says that his mother is too busy to take him.

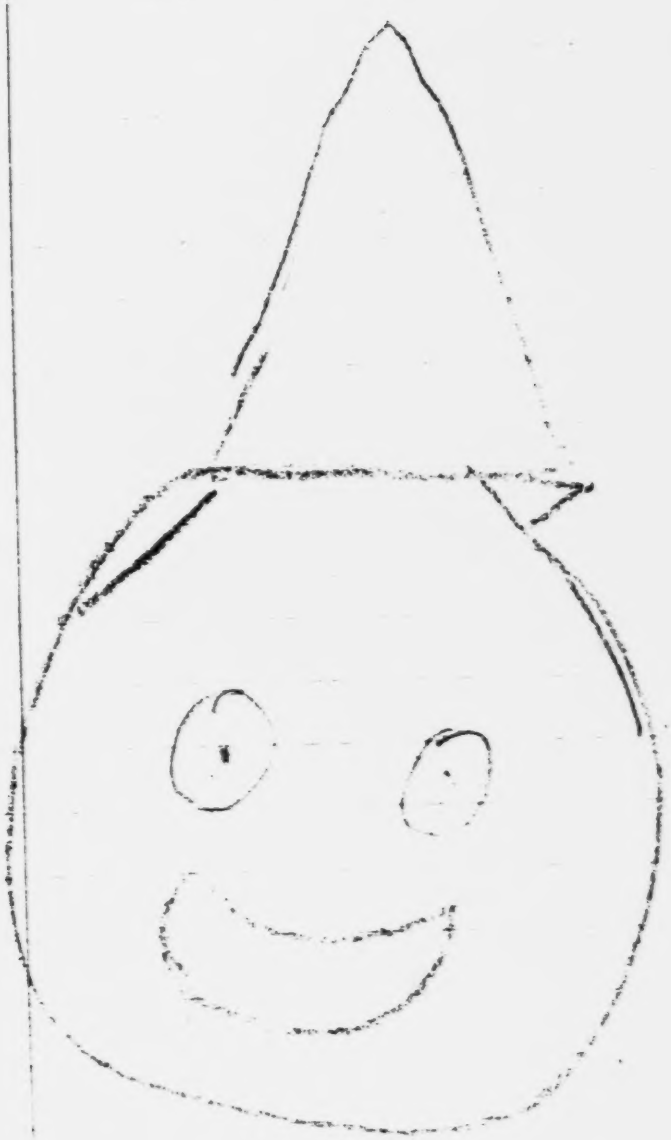
Later we find out why his mother is too busy for him, and why he is both jealous of the attention she gives his younger brother, and afraid of what might happen to this little brother whom he loves.

J-3

my brothr John is in
the hospital it isint

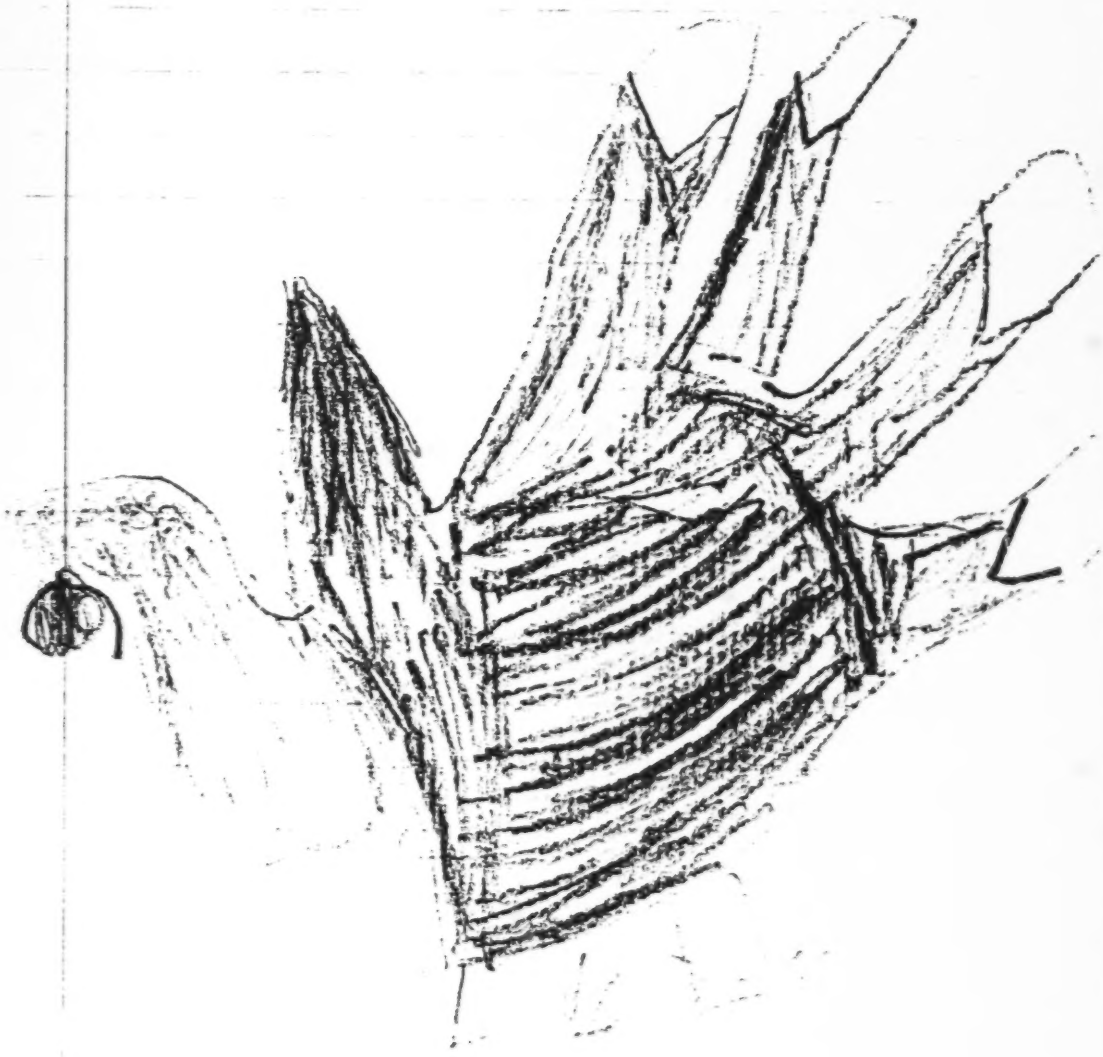
J - 4

~~has~~ he has kidneys
it is bad for him.
thae are mach him
go to the bathrom.
He is in the h
hospital it is bat for.



J-5

I huvr see My mom
that is wI I m
beec cey



These entries about his brother John's kidney problem and his hospital stay seem to be a therapeutic release in dealing with his own fear, sadness, and jealousy. After these entries James writes "Your Kidneys" on several pages with no other words or pictures. The human body is indeed a mystery to him, one which he intends to figure out. The impact of his brother's illness can be seen in his drawings of hand tracings detailing veins and blood, and in his many attempts to draw a kidney. When this family crisis is finally over, James, with the help of his classmates, tries his hand at fiction as part of a class project:

> Frog is going to the store today.
> He is shoping for Christmas. He is
> goting a tree.

Although he still has a long way to go, this attempt at imitative fiction is for James a milestone in reaching out to another point of view, a reality outside of his egocentric perception.

Courtney

The next child whose journal we'll look at is Courtney. She is spending her second year at this grade level and is a full year older than most of the other students, yet she is still as egocentric at age nine as most children are at age three. Courtney has been found to be learning disabled and

language deficient. She does not yet speak in full sentences.

Courtney's journal contains more samples of avoidance techniques than of actual writing.

Throughout her journal Courtney has copied children's nursery rhymes. Interspersed between rhymes, hangman games, and numerous pictures, are samples of Courtney's writing. One can tell immediately that Courtney does not feel confident about her writing. In a hide and seek manner she shares glimpses of her composing ability. Most of her entries are descriptive in nature or personal narratives of recent experiences.

> her cabbage patch doll; a rainbow; ice storm of 1984; dinosaur bones; visit to nanny's house; feeding her cat; shutting the door on her finger; a friend visiting; sibling fights

The descriptions of objects are without much detail, while the narrative accounts are lists of events with neither feelings nor point of view. She does not take many risks in her writing. There is one attempt at revision for the purpose of adding an additional name to the story about her mom taking a picture. This is the only story where Courtney seems aware of a point of view other than her own, for she shows her mother looking at her and her sisters to take their picture.

When Courtney begins to write longer narratives, she lists events and dialogue together in one extremely long sentence connected by a string of "and"s.

Much of Courtney's writing is redolent of the short, choppy sentences and inane dialogue still found in basal pre-primers. Perhaps after struggling through these pre-primers for the past three years in an unsuccessful attempt to learn to read, Courtney has succeeded in learning the language of the genre. This is indeed a sad commentary on our educational system. But there is hope for Courtney, for she clearly prefers the nursery rhymes.

Although Courtney describes a pattern of family fighting without emotion in the following journal entry, when questioned at length by her worried classmates, she admits that these fights are really great fun, with tickling, conspiring, and lots of love. Most of this information comes out during the story conference in yes or no answers or short remarks to the class's interested and caring questions.

C - 3

my Siter fights with me
She punches me in my stomach
sometimes my father comes
and ,starts the fight and
my siter comes and She
punches me in my stomach

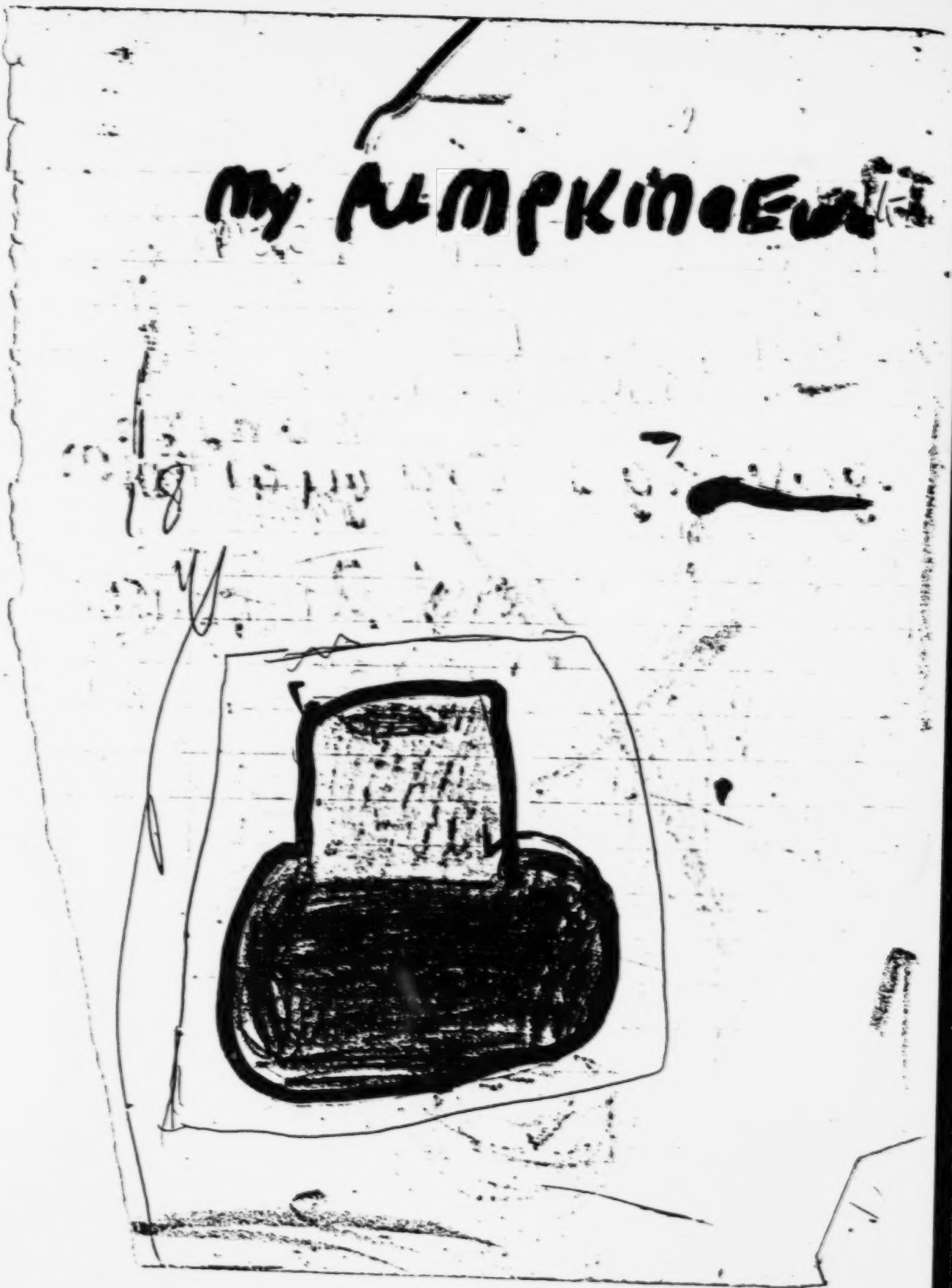
Courtney's writing, and, I suspect, also her thinking, are confused on matters of time. She uses "the day after day" to indicate the day before yesterday. When I question her about this, she indicates that the event in question occurred "before school, when I came home." I think there is something more basic than language development at work here, or perhaps it is language itself that is behind this kind of concept formation.

T.J.

Now we'll look at some amazingly vibrant personal narratives written by T.J. Reading his journal is a real challenge, for at first glance it seems totally illegible. The cover is missing, the stitching is loose, and the overall appearance is ragged and smudged. T.J.'s printing is labored, with many reversals, very little punctuation, capital letters at the middle or end of many words, and often no spaces left between words. Drawings often cover words, rendering them illegible. As he works in the journal, his fingers inadvertantly rub out the penciled writing. To correct this he often writes over some words in crayon or magic marker. Sometimes this makes it even harder to read, but the energy and caring of the young writer manage to shine through. Here is an example:

T-1

I'm giving my mom a calendar for Christmas and I'm giving my mom a candle for Christmas and I'm giving my brother a flashlig and I'm giving my quint a Mickey Mouse Phone and I'm giving Joeya guitar I'm giving my brother markers and I'm giving my [illegible] am


My PUMPKIN

This busy page is a list of the presents T.J. plans to give to all of his relatives. It is written as one long sentence strung together with "and"s, as are most of T.J.'s narratives. Although egocentric, it is not the work of a selfish child. T.J. is more interested in giving presents and affection to others than in acqiring possessions for himself. When he does write about his own Christmas present he is showing an empathy for his mother's point of view. This is a definite stride away from egocentrism. Note the revisions in this writing sample. T.J. has given up the "and"s, trading them here for "but" and "because." This is definite progress in making meaning. By using these new connectors he is demonstrating an understanding of cause and effect and of how people interact.

T-2

I got new boots from my mom ~~[illegible]~~ but she was a suppose to give me the boots for Christmas

mom gave me the boots ~~[illegible]~~ Xmas because it was cold out.

~~[illegible]~~

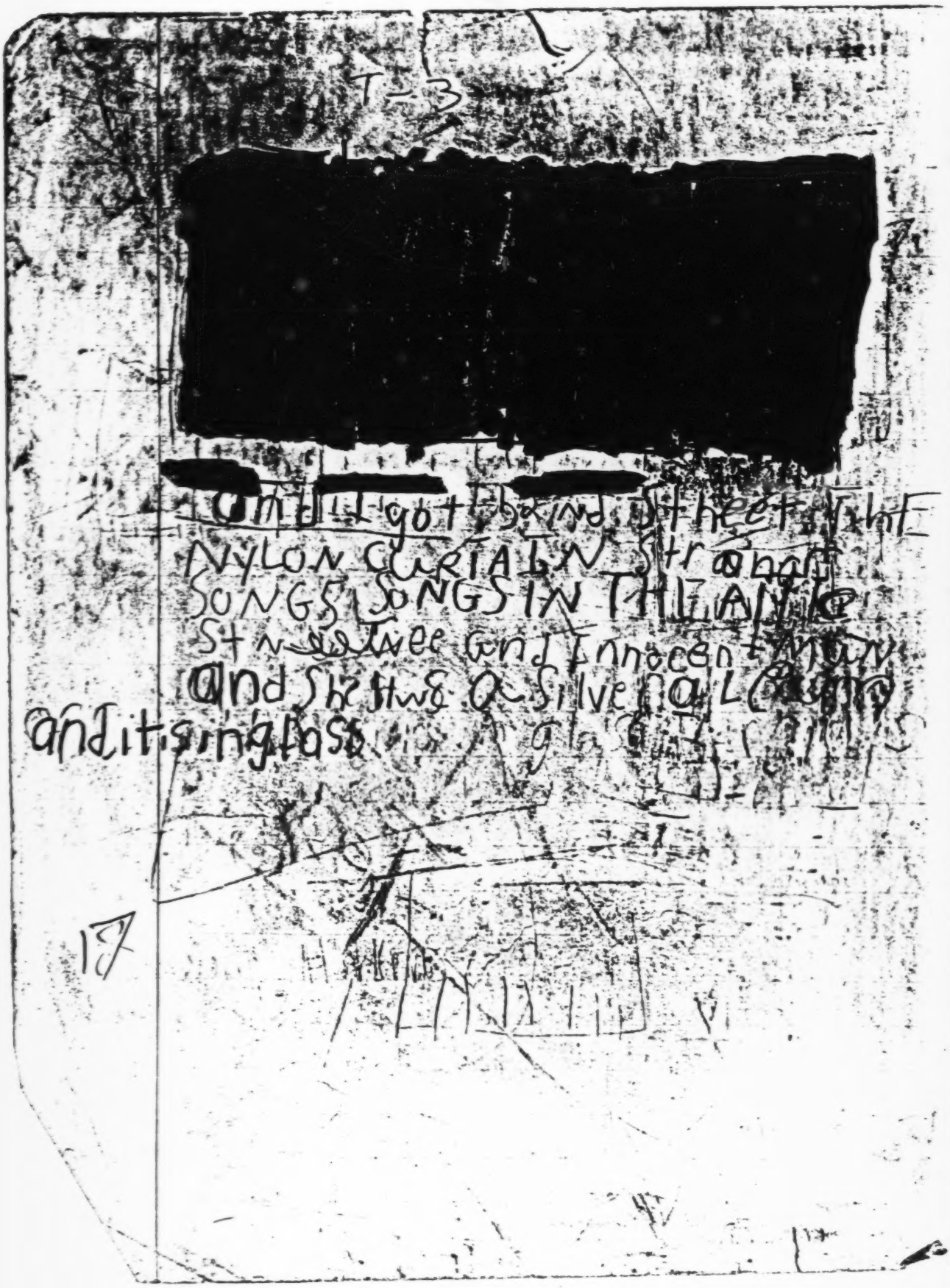
But they got worn out I wor them to much

My father Baccym the poo!

Many of T.J.'s narratives are about the singer, Billy Joel, and Billy Joel's sister, Judy, who is a friend of T.J.'s mother. T.J. is especially fond of Judy and has told the class about her on many occassions. Now he has decided to publish this story about Judy and her famous brother.

[redacted] char

I went to Judys house!
I picked up sticks and got one.
dollar. I got a [redacted] new album
and I got one poster, [redacted] Joel
was 10 motocycles and his songs
are FASCINATING AN INNOCENT.
the LONGEST TEACHER About it up-
town GIRLS are OBSESSIVE ABOUT HIS
eyes Ave. tender MOMENTS ALONE
keeping the Faith Egotcu
and her album from Judy an
the songs are Alle...?
LAURA PRESSURE GOODNIGHT
SHE'S RIGHT ON TIME A
ROOM OUR OWN SURPRISES?
SCANDINAVIAN SKIES?
WHIS ITPORC HESTRA
he has 4 P.y and he has an electric
Payony he gogs PRESSURE Cooker
Hasld house and Judys HOSA
big clock and a body clock and s.
haveing a body g. and She
ho-s a g dacky and an
his Ha g house a


T-3
Until I got Bored I threw that
NYLON CURTAIN Straight
SONGS SONGS IN THE AIR
Stars Twee and Innocent Moon
and She threw a Silver Coin
and it sing to Sea
17

When he reads this story to the class, the children point out to him that, although we already know that Judy is Billy Joel's sister and T.J.'s mother's friend, the reader of his book, a more general audience, will not know. T.J. responds to this with confusion. He says he will try to find out Judy's last name, but is not really convinced that she has one. She is just "Judy" to him. Names are a perfect example of egocentrism at work. Several of these second grade children still don't realize that their mothers and fathers have names other than "Mommy" and "Daddy". They are shocked to find out that I have a first name other than "Mrs." Realizing T.J.'s problem, we all set out to help him with it. Someone mentions Judy Blume, our class's favorite author, and a light seems to flash in T.J.'s brain. Now he realizes that there is another Judy in the world. Robert now suggests a new opening for T.J.'s story:

> I went to Judy's house yesterday. Judy is Billy Joel's sister.

As the conference goes on, T.J. learns that his audience is more interested in Judy's family and Billy Joel's possessions than in the names of the songs in each of Billy Joel's albums, which T.J. has listed meticulously. The final decision to revise remains with the author, but a caring ongoing relationship with a peer editing group is an invaluable asset to any writer.

Barry

Barry is only beginning to learn to read when he enters second grade, but he can draw detailed pictures and, using invented spelling, he writes about those pictures. His writing is often difficult to read, for he reverses letters and has not yet mastered much phonics. When he latches onto a pattern for his writing, he is apt to hold onto it, changing only a few words from one sentence to the next or one story to the next. Here are two examples:

25 B-1

iem a gud boy my m:.

muther givs me appls

my muthergivsme qars

my muthergivsme branu

my muthergivsme cande

my muthergivsme pecrs

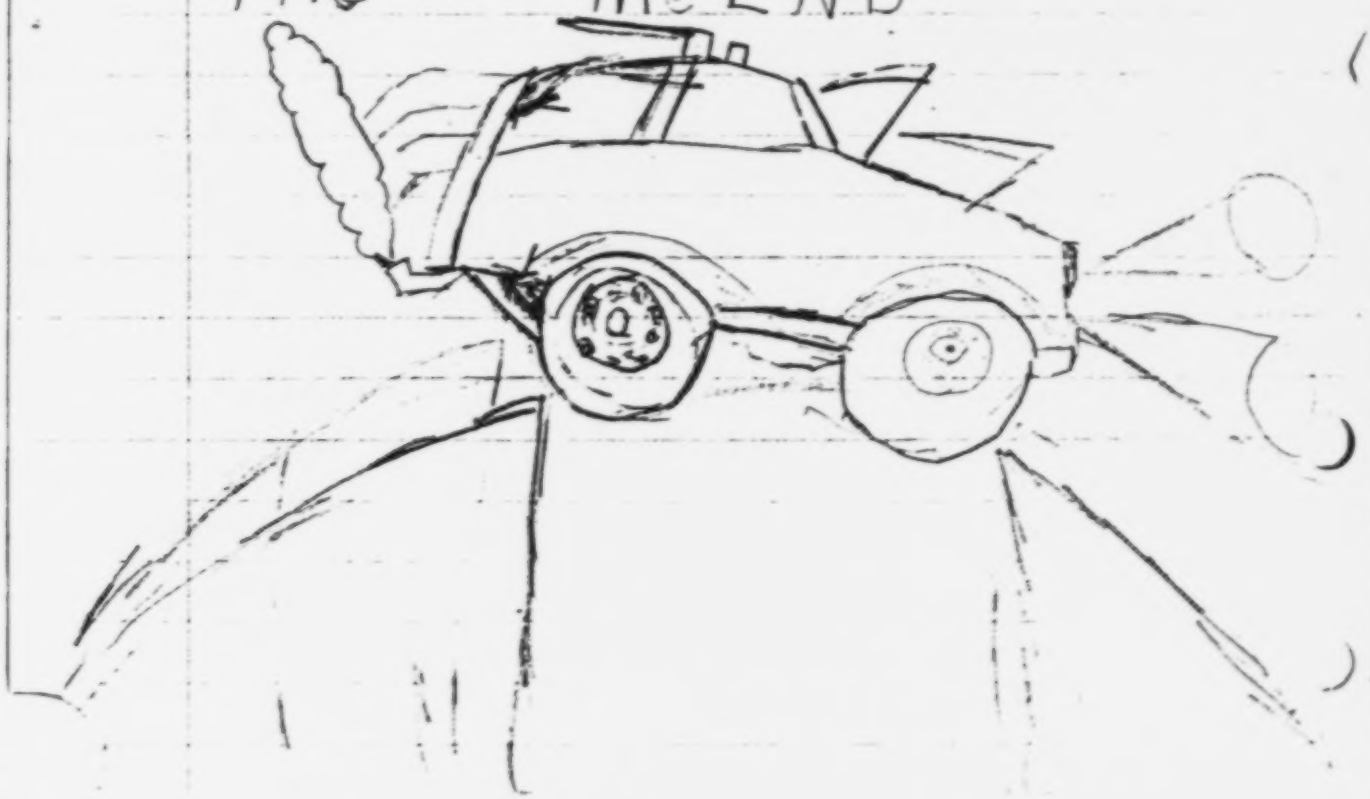
my muthergivsme piy

my momgivs me prensels

my momgivs me wg wrme

26

mytruckis a nowse
truck sumtiwms
I lets my bruther
play withit my truck
I onle let pepl that
ino the END



B-1 15

I em a g. o ry

my mom e gi s me. c. k

my mo me e gi s me. p iy

my mo me gi s me. p p i p

my mo me gi v s me. c a n t

my mo me gi v s me. l icwis

my mo me gi v s me. toes

my mo me gi v s me. c s e

my mo me gi v s me. b a c

my mo me gi v s me. l e s

my mo me gi v s me. c u p c

my mo me gi v s me. j u m

16

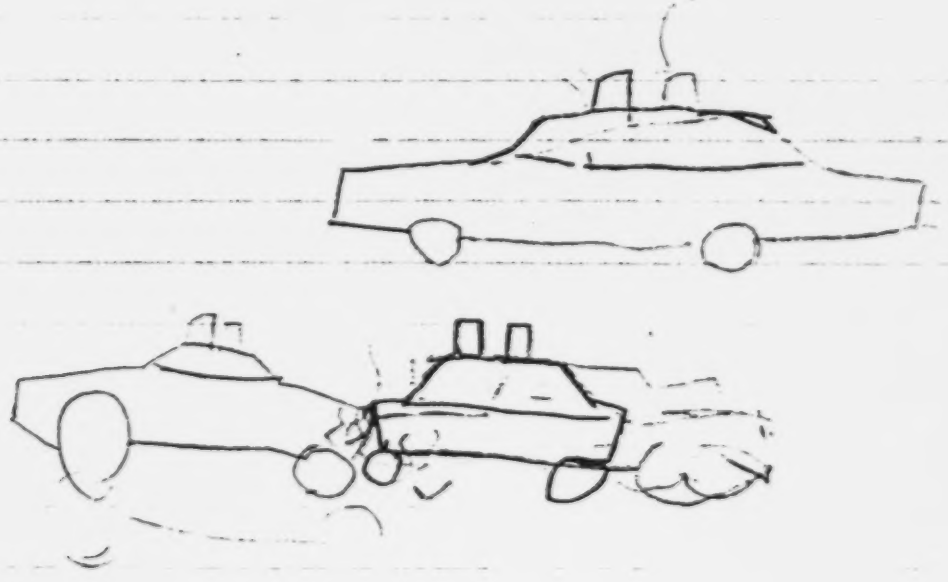
Barry's writing is all personal narrative and all egocentric. Most stories begin with the words "I like." They are about his mother, his father, his toys, and car crashes he has witnessed or imagined. He seems to be fascinated with fast cars and jet planes. Here is his vivid depiction of one of the many car crashes he has seen:

2 9 B-2

me and my fend
was woking don the
stretts and we sorac
crasinto the stret
pol

30

me and my Friend
was gowing fi the
soprmo kit for eis
mom and we ra ples
trage a Fdra menina
car and the teples
crsd and the car bord



In most of Barry's writing the sentences are short and choppy:

> I like Pac-man. I like to play Pac-man.
> Pac-man is friendly.

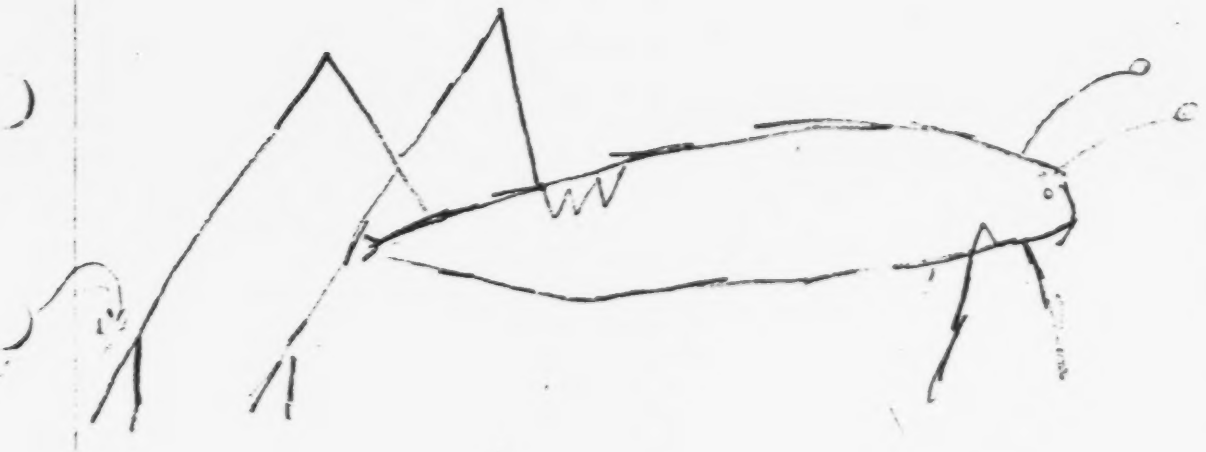
Often he combines sentences, stringing them together with a chain of "and"s:

> I like buses cause they carry people.
> I like cars too and I like cars and
> buses too and I got four cars today.

Notice that he has learned to use "cause" to order his thinking, showing cause and effect. Finally, he learns to use the same combination of "cause" and "and" to explain his relationship to one of nature's food chains:

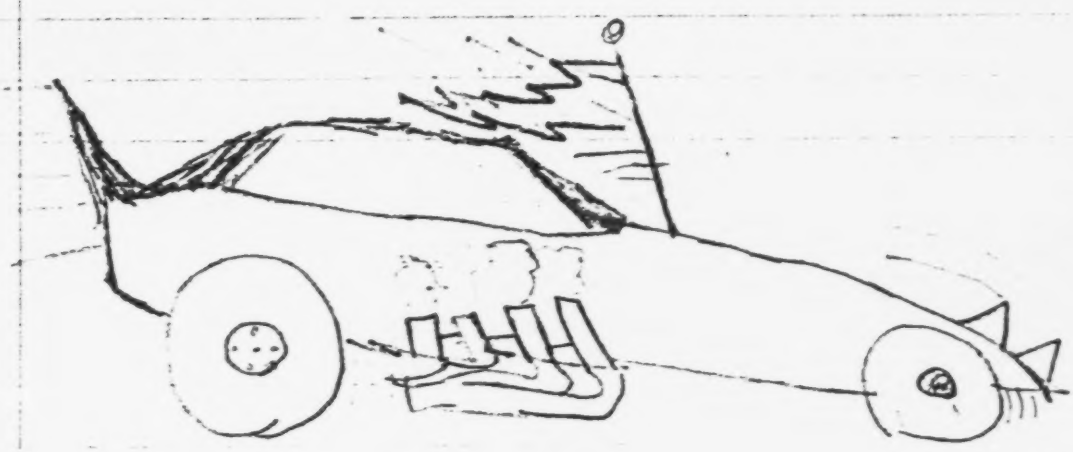
B-3

I like kichits cus
thea eet flis ana
I hate fly's.



I got a lot of cars in my toy box. I like to play with them.

THE END



Tiffany

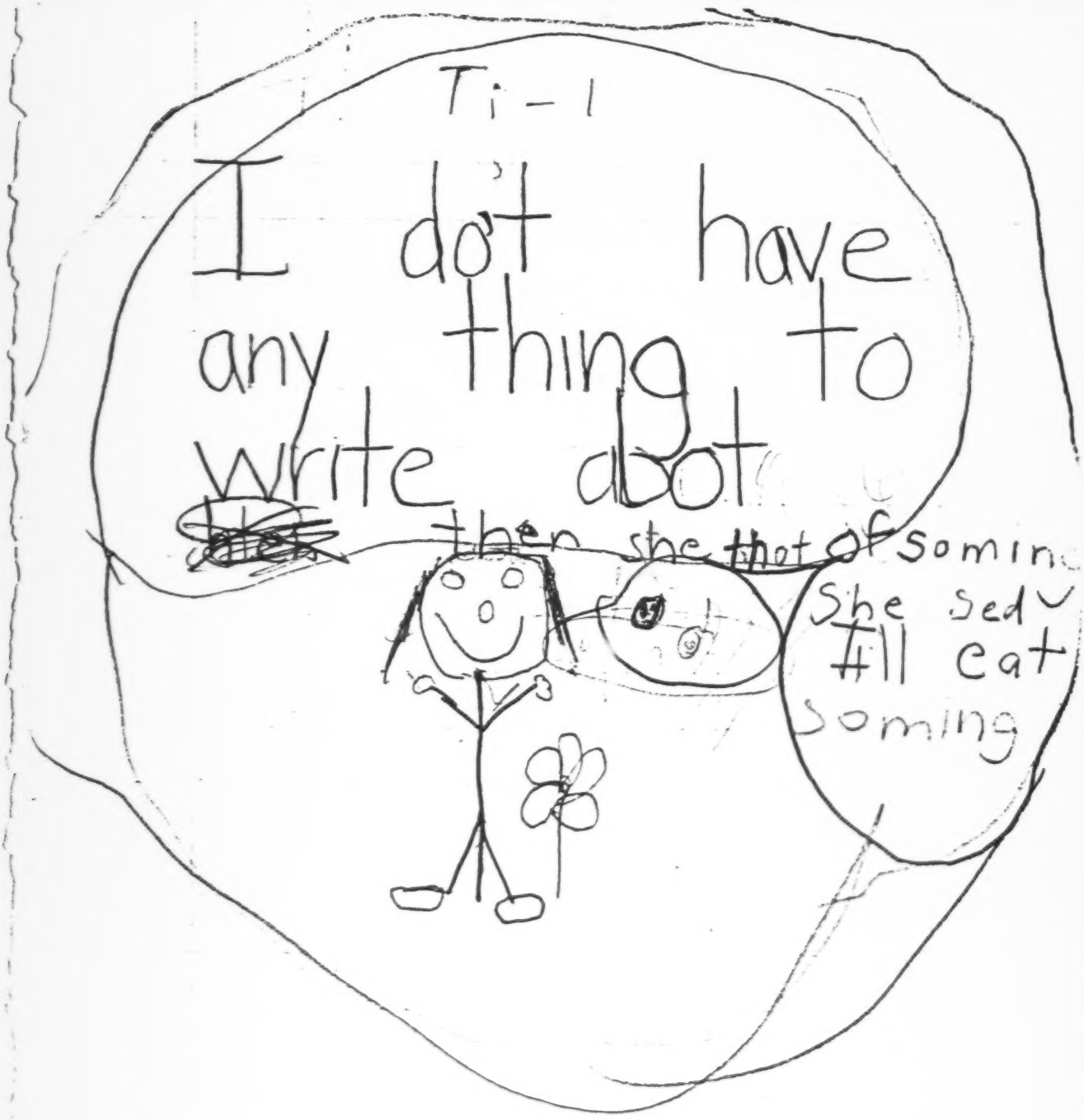
Tiffany's early journal entries are very similar to Barry's:

> I like cats. Because they are fun to play with.

Soon she begins to think about her audience, and learns that she can entertain them by focusing her personal narrative for them. Here is her first successful attempt:

> This is a story about my dog is gone. My daddy let my dog out yesterday and we couldn't find him. We looked every-where.

Although Tiffany is a fluent writer, generating new topics daily, she occasionally meets with writer's block. In this journal entry she takes us into the process of recognizing and dealing with her writer's block:


Ti-1
I dot have any thing to write dbot
then she thot of somin
She sed
#ll eat
soming

5

Tiffany, like all of these other young writers, is learning to spell as she learns to read and write. For most of her writing she uses invented spelling, and she uses it very well. Her words are spelled phonetically, often more phonetically than orthographically correct spelling. When she can't decide whether to write mommy or mother, she invents a useful compromise: "momther."

Tiffany uses descriptive detail to bring her reader into her private world. When she describes her winter coat, her voice comes through loud and clear, making the reader feel the coat as well as see it:

> I have a coat. It is big and warm.
> It has pockets and a hood. It has
> four blue buttons and a tie and bands
> to hold it on. It has fur on the hood.

From the expressive mode of the personal narrative, Tiffany moves into the poetic mode, writing a "Frog and Toad" story and this attempt at poetry:

Ti-2

Red

Red lolepops make
me fellike chra
chrares.

Redsrosesis mike
me fellli like
poesis to.

Later, continuing in the poetic mode, Tiffany writes an acrostic about her friend Leah:

Likes Lollipops
Eats bananas
Ate a sandwich
Hungry Leah

Lauren

Almost all of the writing we have looked at thus far has been personal narrative. In Lauren's writing we can see a progression from personal narrative to an experimentation with fiction. The movement is halting and tentative, going through the stages of retelling familiar fairy tales, roleplaying as a prewriting experience, writing questions, and shaping hypotheses. When she actually begins to write fiction of her own, it becomes her favorite genre, replacing the personal narrative almost completely.

Now let's look more closely at Lauren's journal and watch the progression. Quite a lot of Lauren's first entries take the form of one long sentence that lists the sequence of events in a personal narrative. These events are connected by "and"s or "then"s. Later on in her journal she revises her stories by eliminating "and"s and "then"s and by writing clearer, more precise sentences. Revision is limited at this stage. She incorporates not only the immediate time element, but uses past and future tenses to support her main ideas.

Most of her topics stem from personal experience. Her writing is still egocentric:

> my friend, my rabbit, I was having a race, my cat, I went to Florida.

When Lauren is ready to take some risks at playful writing,

She begins her imaginative role playing:

> If I was a leaf caterpillars will eat
> me all up. And I'd hang on and fall off.

Now comes the question formation:

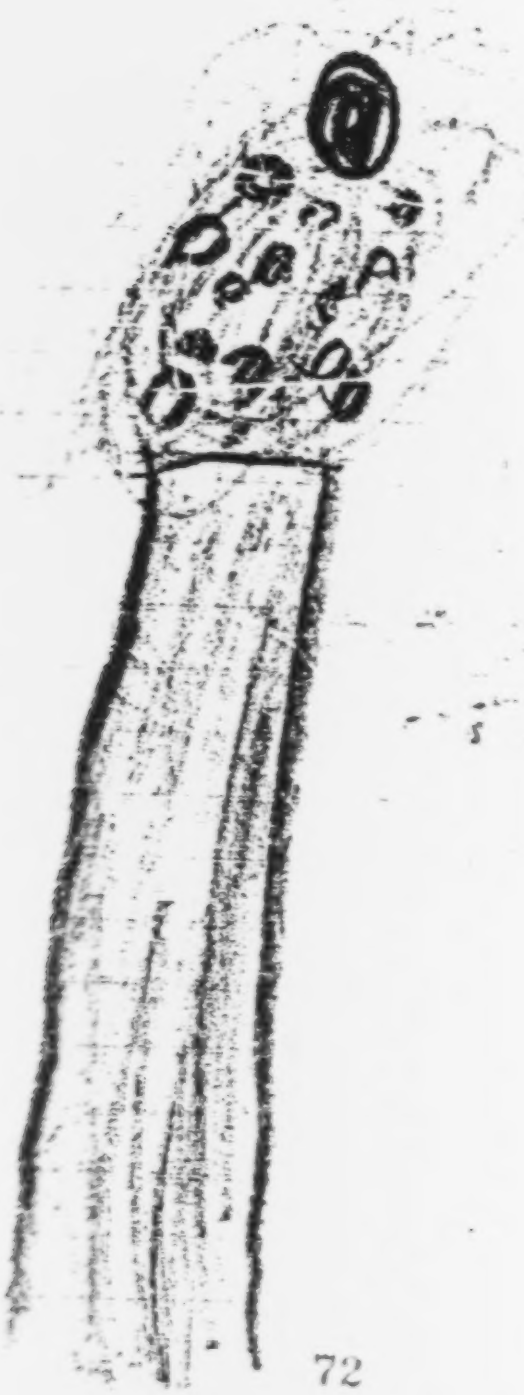
> Are people and animals alike?

Lauren continues to expand her point of view by imagining how it would feel to be an apple pit:

L-1

The STory of a apple Tri
if I wre a pi Te I wod
be in a Grown and Grou
up to be a tall tr
and may be same wan
wil Stay on me.

12



Lauren seems to enjoy retelling some of her favorite children's stories (Little Red Hen, Little Red Riding Hood). Books have taken on a new importance in her life:

L-2

yesterday
I went
to the
libiry and
I brot home
8 books and we
want home

14

She now uses her writing as a way of recording something new she has learned:

> The book said that is a baby kangaroo called a joey. At the bus stop we called Joey kangaroo.
>
> I learned where the middle C is. (At piano lesson)

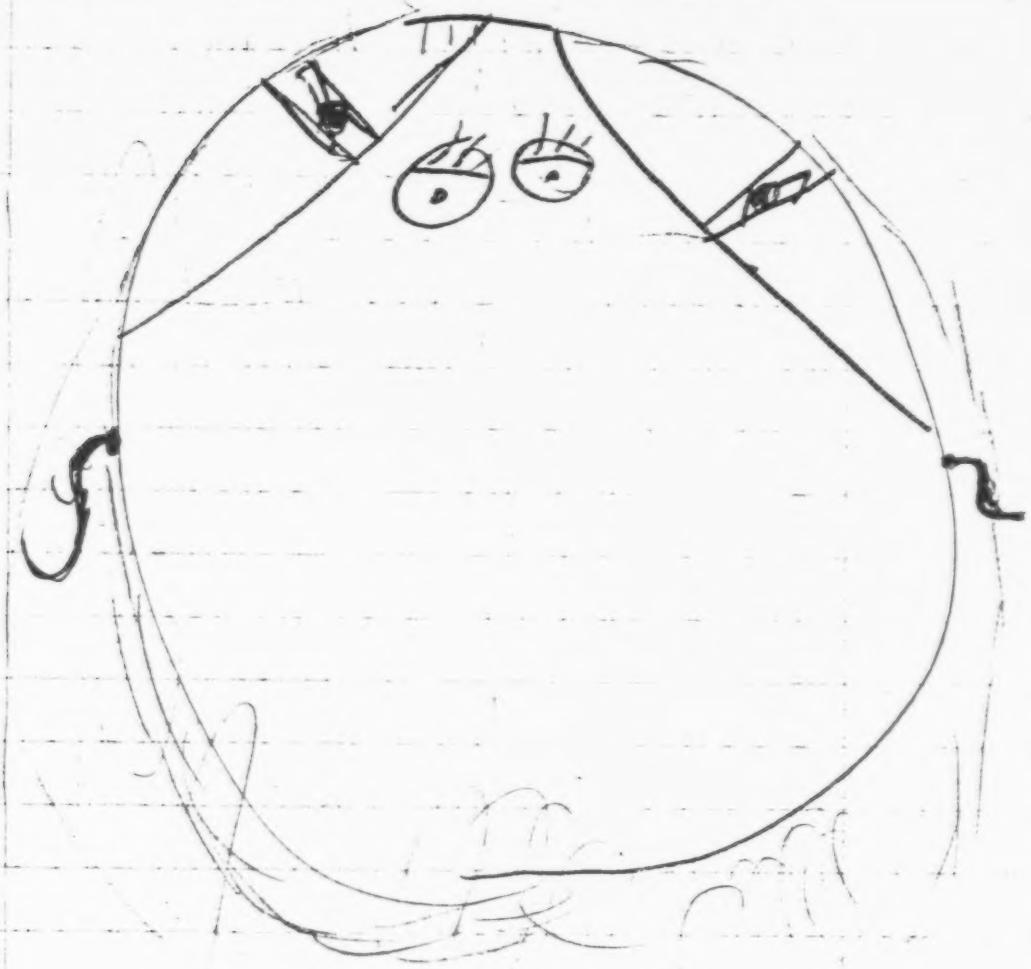
Clearly, Lauren is learning by shaping experience in her own life, adding facts and points of view gleaned from literature, and sorting it all out in the writing process.

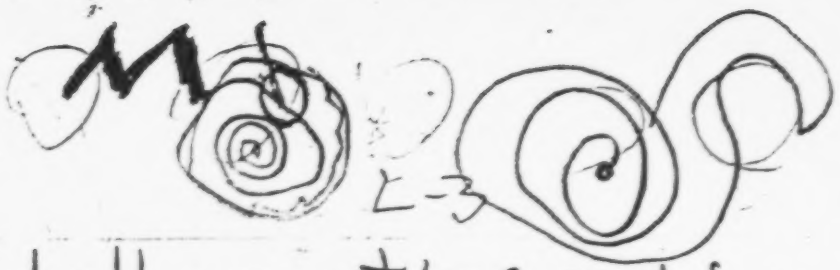
As Lauren moves into fiction, her dialogue shows a growing sense of audience. Her writing here seems more relaxed. She is beginning to articulate the opinions of others and at the same time maintain her own point of view as the narrator. Here is Lauren's most developed piece of fiction:

L-3

~~I~~ Valerie's Play House

Once upon a time there was a little girl. She was eaight years old. Whell she was going in the play-house and she cleaned it be for she went out. And she went in the play house, and it was a mess. Somone has been here she thout. And then she herd a rrrrrrrr nosie. It was a big, big schary hary monster! so she ran out as fast as her little ~~feet~~ legs can carry her. And then she meet her friend, Tracy. Tracey, Tracey, Tracey! Oh. I'm so glad your here. Theres a big, big schary hary monster in my playhouse! none sence Valerie, theres no shade things as monsters.

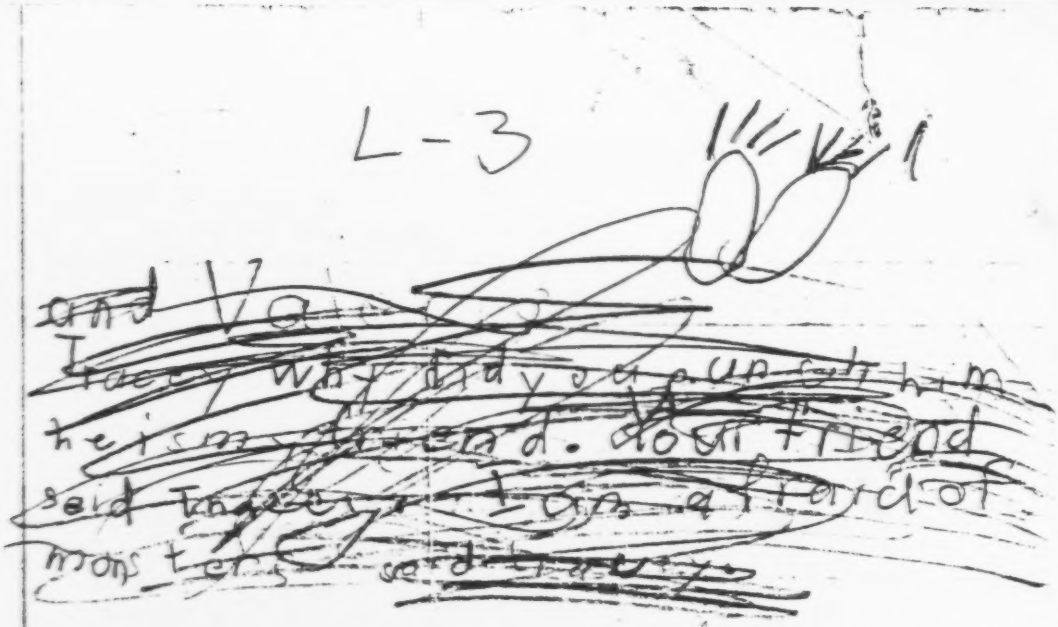




L-3

whell now there is.
Even go and look.
O.K. said Tracey.
You are right. There is
a big, big scary hary monster.
I do not ever never
want to go in the play house dragon
Oh eher am I They said.
So thay both ran as fast as
they can but the monster
followed them so they got
verey scard. but Tracey and
Valerie hid behind a buch.
But the moster looked and looked
and then the mother found
them. Valerie began to
cry because the mother
found her. And grabed
her. Tracey punched
the mothero. And the monsther
stared to cry. Tracey you saved
the day said Valerie.

L-3



§ee I am not afraid of any thing. Thats wha t you think. Thers a snake in the playhouse. Let me look help! your rigbt. You said you arent afaird

Robert

While Lauren's writing moves from the expressive mode of personal narrative to the poetic mode of fiction, Robert's writing moves from the expressive to the transactional mode of non-fiction (Britton, 1970). It is interesting to note that while Lauren dabbles in the transactional mode on her way to the poetic, listing facts she has learned from books, Robert dabbles in the poetic, as seen in this story, on his route toward the transactional.

> Imagination is a man with snake hair.
> When he looks at you, you will turn
> to stone.

Although Robert is usually too shy to read his writing aloud or consider publishing it, he seems to gain a great deal from participation in small peer-editing groups. He goes so far as to demonstrate in his own writing the use of the personal pronoun:

R-1

My tracs

I have two

tow tracs and

they go by thar

selfand htay.

go withbatures

trick-or-
treat

R-1

they means
My trocs

I am a pirit
I have a ering.

Robert's writing shows very little egocentrism. He begins by using writing as a tool for expressing his feelings and thoughts about his personal experiences. He initially uses simple sentence construction, but, as he progresses through his journal, he expands his ideas by adding, substituting and rearranging words and phrases. Here are examples of Robert's revisions:

> (me and my dad) My dad and I went in his truck.
> The Rangers (they) played the Flyers.

Robert has a specific audience and purpose in mind throughout most of his writing. He uses precise descriptive language and his details support his main ideas:

> My worm is squirmy
> He has stitches, pointy teeth, horns and blood dripping down his face. (about his monster).
> My pumpkin is small and has a broken stem.

As Robert moves toward the transactional mode, writing becomes a precise tool for him. He uses it to understand and to learn new things. Writing seems to help Robert focus his information so that it becomes more meaningful and useful to him and his audience. Writing and thinking skills reinforce each other, as seen in this excerpt from his first draft of a book about the Islanders' Hockey Team:

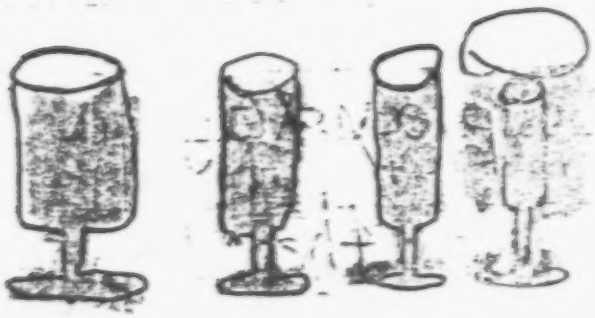
R-2

The Islanders lost against the Rangers. The score was 3-2, But I still like the Islanders. They played again Saturday against the Rangers. I did not watch the game on Saturday. But I hear that the Islanders won against the Rangers.

~~Saterday~~

R-2

The Islanders are the Stanly Cup charps. they hav 4 cups.



Using writing as a tool to crystalize his learning about the solar system, Robert makes one small error. He draws and lists eight planets and writes: "These are all nine". The one planet he has forgotten to include is the earth. This is a classic case of egocentrism, like the young child who draws his family and leaves himself out of the picture.

Christine

Like Lauren and Robert, Christine is able to move her writing beyond the expressive mode. She experiments with both the transactional and the poetic, and seems equally at ease in each. She has a voice which is uniquely her own, and it comes through loud and clear in everything she writes:

> Some gypsies are mean and some are nice.
> I'm the nice one. I was a gypsy and Lisa
> was a bunny. She looked funny because
> mommy put the ears on wrong. Then she
> said, "Why are you laughing?" We said,
> "You put the ears on backwards."

Christine has a definite audience and purpose in mind for each piece of writing. The excerpt above is from her Halloween story. Her audience is her class, and her purpose is both to inform and to entertain. In the following piece of writing her parents are the audience, and her purpose is to tell them how much she loves them, while admitting that she also likes her teachers:

Ch-1

Mom and dad
I wont you
to no that
I Love you
verey verey
very much
and I love
Lisa to But

Ch-1

I like Mrs Ganz and Mrs Teery. I like every botey in my famly.

ok!

Christine uses writing as a tool when talking has failed to accomplish her purpose:

> Lara gave me "My Little Pony" puzzle.
> She thinked I do not like it. If I
> tell her I like it, she said I don't
> like it.

When she is preparing for her role as a mother in an original class play, she uses writing as a way to discover the point of view of the character she is to play:

> We raised our children in a beautiful
> place, but the workers chopped all the
> trees down and we moved because they
> built buildings. There was polluted
> water.

Christine's empathy with the character she plays is so complete that when she says, "Oh, Robert Dear!" during the play, the audience believes that they are listening to an old married couple, rather than a pair of second graders.

Throughout her writing, Christine plays with language to make it entertaining and musical. There are touches of poetry in much of her prose:

> It is raining outside. Drip drop down
> the windowsill. It is fun to see it
> drip drop.
> My sister is 1 year old. She is getting
> big and she is a good girl, but sometimes
> she pulls my hair, ouch!
> She is afraid of you and the dark night
> too. If you play with her she will like
> you, but you better say "good girl" or
> she will bite you.

Christine seems very comfortable revising. She makes use of carets, cross-outs, erasures, and re-writes. These are used to clarify meaning, to be more precise and to organize words to bring more structure to stories.

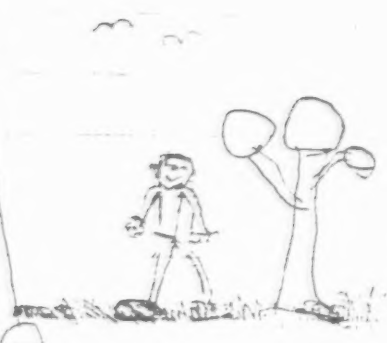
One of Christine's favorite topics seems to be the library. Throughout her journal she makes numerous entries that describe what you might find at the library. Her writing leads her to investigate new topics:

> I want to go to the library to find out how do rabbits hop.

Gary

Like Robert, Gary expands his writing, beginning in the expressive mode and moving quickly to both the transactional and the poetic. Even his personal narratives have transactional and poetic elements. His first journal entry is an excellent example of movement into the transactional in the middle of an expressive piece of writing:

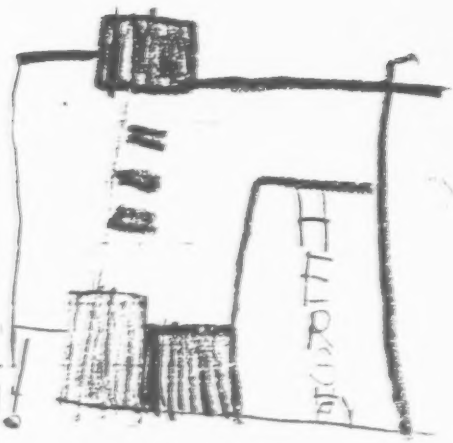
G-1



I like to go caping in the summer and play with my toys and go to paris and I went to HERSHEY'S.

G-1

HERSHEY



makes chokelet!

They make chokelet milk and chokelet bars and make lots of chokelet things. And it tastes good!

When Gary decides to write about the seasons of the year, he uses writing as a precise, many faceted tool. First and foremost, writing is used to organize and present to an audience of peers Gary's collected knowledge about the four seasons of the year. Next Gary uses a combination of lively verbs and adjectives with a finely tuned ear that makes use of rhyme and rhythm. The result is a piece of literature worthy of a much older and more experienced writer. It works as well in the poetic domain as in the transactional: